

Maelstrom

MAELSTROM #10
December 1992

Buz Eddy
7500 212th St. #205
Edmonds, WA 98026

American Diplomacy Register is launched! Last week Issue #1 went to most of the pubbers that have expressed interest in this project. This was followed within 24 hours by issue #2 that contained a majority of the games of 1992 DixieCon. Circulation was primarily to the players in that tournament that achieved a rateable result.

The two issues gave the preliminary idea of the register. The Events and Where to Play Diplomacy features will stay current but won't change much from issue to issue. There will be changes in the text from time to time as the organizational/promotional material is updated. But each issue will process the latest provided results, listing the games, and the rating results. Circulation of a given issue will be to the players and organizer of the reported results.

At the present time American Diplomacy Register is in a data base building phase, so that any rating results may later be modified if earlier results of the same player are entered to the system.

I have to mention the cooperative effort of David Hood and Pete Gaughan. They share the hope that American Diplomacy Register might provide a useful service to Diplomacy. They have each taken considerable time making suggestions and providing needed assistance. David provided the 1992 DixieCon report with enough narrative to work out at least eleven of the fourteen games, and he suggested other sources to try to find game results. Pete suggested sources to seek game results, and event information as well as a few leads to locating existing Diplomacy groups.

Correspondence and commentary will stay here in Maelstrom. Postal Diplomacy ratings, and the discussion and development of features for American Diplomacy Register will take place here.

LETTERS

Maelstrom #9 prompted correspondence and commentary in the zines. Let's lead off with DOUG BEYERLEIN. Doug, as I have mentioned before, was my hiking buddy in the late 60's and early 70's. There was a Seattle FTF group that met either a Doug's house or any other place we could flop down a board. He was already involved in postal play and asked if I could develop a rating system. I said "sure" and I did. It only took 25 years!

Dear Buz,

I have just finished reading Maelstrom #9 and the material reprinted from Everything #26 and #28 on the subject of Avalon Hill's subsidy of Diplomacy World and the Boardman Numbers. It has been a few years (16), but I remember well the discussions with Walt Buchanan and Don Greenwood. I think the material you printed does a good of describing what happened in '76. However, for the record I should clarify that, despite what I wrote in Everything #28, every regular postal game received a Boardman Number regardless of my receiving a one dollar game fee. To maintain the completeness of the Boardman Numbers and Everything out of my own pocket once the subsidy ended.

On the same subject I should point out that, in hindsight, the postal Diplomacy hobby missed a great opportunity in 1976 when Avalon Hill bought the game from GRI. If the hobby had been united behind the IDA (International Diplomacy Association), Diplomacy World, and the Boardman Numbers we would still have AH's financial support today. That support could have been used to build and expand the hobby both postally and face-to-face. But, as you know, this hobby has rarely

been united. I doubt that this will change without a change in focus by the movers and shakers of the hobby.

I have to take issue with you on your premise that Diplomacy World and the Boardman Numbers have hampered the growth of the popularity of Diplomacy. Postal Diplomacy was (and is) the only game in town for most Diplomacy enthusiasts. If nothing else the postal game has tied together the global Diplomacy hobby, as it is the only communications link between the hobbyists. GRI (and later AH) simply went where the action was. They would not have invested in developing the local club structure that you advocate in the absence of the postal hobby. AH never did that for the original boardgames that they marketed in the 60's.

Development of local clubs will have to come from local tournament organizers and retail sellers of the game. These people have vested interest in promoting the game and the organizational skills to make it happen. They are also a natural focal point for bringing face-to-face players together. And, as one who organized face-to-face games in Seattle between 1965 and 1972, I know all too well the difficulty in getting seven players together for a game. It is not easy to reach the critical mass of players necessary to establish and maintain a thriving local club.

Having said all of the above, I probably should clarify that I support your efforts. Even though I have retired from game play I would love to see the game expand in popularity, both at the local face-to-face level and the postal level. Diplomacy is a great game and deserves a wider audience. And, therefore, I offer my help in promoting play of the game and your activities in that direction.

Doug Beyerlein
15602 22nd Ct. SE
Mill Creek, WA 98012

Pete Gaughan also took me to task for suggesting that Diplomacy World was somehow responsible for stifling the popularization of Diplomacy. When I reread Maelstrom #9 I have to admit that is what I said. What I intended to say is that the designation of Diplomacy World and the Boardman Numbers by Games Research as the official vehicles of Diplomacy promotion was a poor choice, because a very small minority of Diplomacy players ever become involved in postal play. (Remember 6000-7000 sets are sold annually and the new blood lists run about 100).

There is a widely held convention that "official" Diplomacy games have a Boardman Number and everything else doesn't count. The non-existence of game by game national tournament records exemplifies this. But that is not a controlling. If the services provided by American Diplomacy Register are considered to be of value, then the convention will weaken over time.

In the past year I have examined every compilation of Boardman Numbered games, and hold nothing but total respect for the many, usually thankless, hours put into the task. John Boardman, ..., ..., Conrad Von Metzke, Doug Beyerlein, Cal White, Dennis Agosto, Don Ditter, Kathy Byrne, Bill Quinn, Steve Heinowski, Don Williams & Gary Behnen. (Along with the publishers, John Weswig, Bill Quinn, and Melinda Holley) These are the heroes of our hobby. These are the people that have given the hours to provide the structure that separates postal diplomacy from other postal multi-player games. This effort promoted Diplomacy.

Diplomacy World has also promoted Diplomacy. It is, of course, possible that Diplomacy World could incorporate the services that American Diplomacy Register has outlined. David Hood and I have corresponded at great length on this topic. But there appears to be no compelling reason for Diplomacy World to do anything differently. American Diplomacy Register is not a duplication of effort, but rather an exploration of services designed to try to give Diplomacy World type support and Boardman Number type structure to Diplomacy play among those that do not wish to participate in postal play. The goals of American Diplomacy Register, Diplomacy World, and the Boardman Numbers are not mutually exclusive, and I should hope they are complementary.

The next letter is from RON NEWMAS-
TER. Rather than present the letter in its entirety it will
be better to simply answer his questions.

Maelstrom ratings rate postal Diplomacy, original
players, on a W,D, L basis. If I picked up someone in
Crimson Sky that was not playing Diplomacy currently it
was unintentional. In some other zines I searched on
the entire sub list.

Ron's next question reflects those received from
several others as well. It has to do with certain
technical aspects of the Maelstrom ratings. Up to this
point I have been silent with regard to the system
itself. I wanted to hear the results evaluated, not the
system. What I have heard is reactions from the top 10%
suggesting that the system is brilliantly accurate, and
not much from others. I'll assume silence implies
approval and move on. What follows is a duplication of
the Maelstrom Rating description that accompanied
American Diplomacy Register #1.

MAELSTROM RATINGS

The Maelstrom rating system was developed to evaluate
the performance of the play of the game of Diplomacy.
The data of over 1400 games of postal Diplomacy were
processed in an attempt to evaluate the validity of the
results. The primary purpose of the rating project is
to develop a tool to help club and tournament
organizers. Accordingly, certain features that would
better "rate" postal Diplomacy, most notably
replacement play, have been discarded for simplicity.

The assumptions of the system are:

- . the player's result in a game is either win,
draw or loss
- . the strength of opposition is a major factor in
evaluating performance
- . the country played is a minor factor in
evaluating performance
- . replacement play is a different activity than
original play

The calculations are:

. All players begin with a rating of 1000. All
ratings that fall computationally below 1000, revert
to 1000.

. A player makes a contribution to the game "pot" which
is between 5% and 9% of his rating depending on the
country played. (Country adjustment factors are updated
with each set of data, but remained stable after the
base had more than 1000 games entered.) The pot is
multiplied by an equalization factor, so that a win
followed by six losses will result in the same rating.
The "pot" is then awarded in equal shares to the
winner(s).

old rating - contribution + award = new rating

The next question in Newmaster's letter asks how does
it work when an your draw with both original and
replacement players.

Mechanically the data base is scanned for the original
players and the pot is constructed from those ratings.
The next prompt is "number of winners" and the award is
computed, so that a winners award is all or some
fraction of the pot. The award is given to original
players that participate in the final resolution.
Original players that drop out are scored as losses
even if the country went on to draw or win. (Note that
this results in points being deleted from the system,
as does retirements, but the reversion to 1000 adds
points as does the equalization computation. With any
set of data this will hit an equilibrium. The early
Postal results achieved this after about 50 games, but
it was a small population.

This is being presented because a few number freaks
have asked. Number mechanics is not a topic of personal

interest other than to satisfy myself of a certain
level of adequacy. The control factor is of interest.
If a player decides that Maelstrom ratings are "valid",
it is a package, and they are accepting the validity of
W,D,L scoring as well, and accepting a system that
survival is of no value, and center count means
nothing. In the latest issue of Perelandra Pete Gaughan
calls the system "ruthless". He has on prior occasions
stated his opinion that subset objectives, (survival,
and max center count) are worthy of pursuit.

The entire next page of Ron Newmaster's letter deals
with analysis of Fritz Juhnke's article in Diplomacy
World #68. I am not going to cover that area at this
time because I want to review Juhnke's technical work
before I comment on the conclusions that he has
inferred. We will look at the last four paragraphs of
the Newmaster letter, and I think you can deduce
something of the nature of the six deleted paragraphs
reviewing the Juhnke article.

....Perhaps the die-hard statisticians among us are
looking for a Dip rating to represent too much. A Dip
rating is not a DNA-laden chromosome which will
determine a Dip players result in any particular game
he is about to play. If past performance is an
indicator of future performance, then I believe a Dip
rating to be useful. It may be useful for outside
observers in predicting the likely outcome of a
particular game of seven rated players. Much like a
race handicapper's tip sheet, ratings may help you
decide where to place your bet. Are the odds even and
the payout fair? If all players were truly equal and
had the same Dip rating, the impartial observer of the
game would not/could not use player strength in his
effort to forecast which players would finish "in the
money". The gambler would use other factors to decide
on whom to bet. Would I bet on Italy to win. Give me
100 - 1 odds and of course I will. Would I bet on
England or Turkey to be around for the draw? It depends
on what odds you're giving.

I think Dip ratings personalized to the player are
useful only in setting the opening betting line for a
particular game between seven players. As such your
preference toward listing players' ratings by the pool
(zine) in which they swim is an excellent idea. It
treats the zine like a local gaming club and let's
everyone else know who the current 'club' champ is.

Will some people play for ratings? of course. Will some
people game the system. Of course. Some people are
insufferably obnoxious about letting you know their IQ
test scores or SAT scores from twenty years ago! It
still comes down to sitting at the table or taking pen
in hand and playing. Those people who embroider their
rating on their lapel just add to the burden they carry
into negotiations. The people who say they can do then
show they can do deserve the right to flaunt as much as
they want. Those who do not care about ratings will not
care about ratings. Those who are concerned about
ratings will find that the topic is of interest only to
those who also care.

So rate on, Buz, but do codify your methods and publish
them. Can a first time player calculate his rating upon
completion of his first game knowing the current
ratings of his opposition or must the entire data base
of interdependent prior game/player results be known.
If so, that must be one grand 1400 row by 1700 column
spreadsheet you've got there.

Ron Newmaster

Let see, you need the equalization factor, which is
1.4, and you need the current country factors to
compute contribution, but 7% of rating for everyone
should provide a reasonable approximation. So, for
Maelstrom ratings the answer is that a proximate rating
can be derived. This won't be true for ADR for a while
because the nature of the open register. Any earlier
data becoming available will result in recalculation of
subsequent data.

The letter from KEITH SHERWOOD started with topics that have already been covered and he discussed the use of computers in the hobby for data base development and for archives.

Then he touches the weakness of FTF Diplomacy.

... I found your archival reprints quite fascinating and since you invited comments, I will boldly step up and offer two obvious obstacles to a Diplomacy hobby as wide spread as chess or bridge: the length of the game (6+ hours) and the number of people required. Both are factors to its particularly good match to mail play. I certainly agree that Diplomacy is a superior game, but chess and bridge may be played in an evening or lunch hour.

Of course, those two obstacles are addressed not only by play by mail, but also by your proposed Diplomacy clubs. I played FTF 4 years before getting into PBM, as part of a High School game club. We had 10 or 12 hard core players and at least another dozen not so hard core. We would play two games (14 players) on Saturday, all day Saturday. But High Schoolers typically have more free time than professional adults.

....

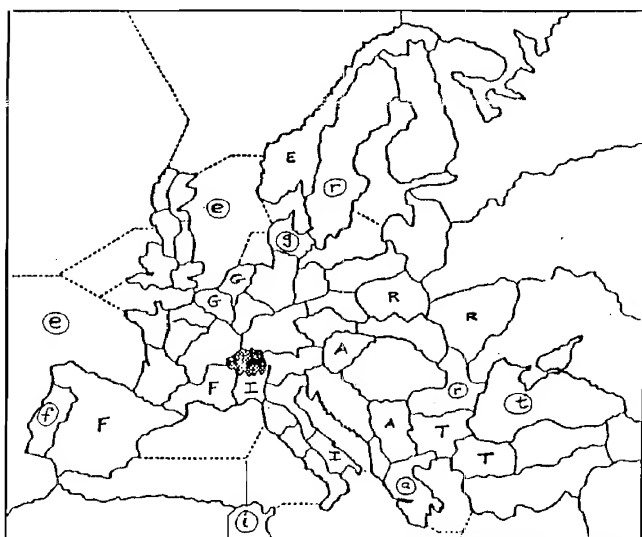
Best, Keith

Certainly! On both counts. The facilitating of players finding games, and organizers finding players is the primary purpose of the Registry.

When Doug was running the floating Dip game the procurement of seven people was difficult. What my subsequent group was able to do was find a regular place and time. This let everyone become a recruiter.

With respect to the duration in my last club we adopted the convention of 15 minutes year 1-3, 10 minutes year 4-6, and 5 minutes of diplomacy thereafter. I don't know how much it changed the play, but it did move the games closer to the four hour mark.

If you have any experiences that might help overcome either of these two problems or any other that a club organizer might encounter, I would very much like to hear from you.



FALL 1901 CALHAMER 1991AB

MAELSTROM PRIZE GAME

Allan B. Calhamer
1992 AB

We will separate Winter for this first year only. But we will use a quick 3 week turn.

Winter 01 Deadline - DECEMBER 26,1992

- England - Larry Botimer (3791) 34404 54th Ave. S.
Auburn WA 98001 (206) 735-7459
- France - Gary Behnen (13522) 13101 S. Trenton
Olathe, KS 66062 (913) 829-1474
- Germany - Chris Hurley (2300) 3508 Orbitan Rd.
Parkville, MD 21234 HM (410) 882-9436
WK 1-800-FOR-CNET x 6766
- Italy - Eric Voogd (1000) 22620 Byron St.
Hayward, CA 94541 Day (510) 727-5331
Eve (510) 582-4783
- Austria - Bob Acheson (3245) 15715 92nd Ave.
Edmonton, Alb T5R 5C5 Canada
(403) 489-8258
- Russia - Arthur Shulman (1792) 45 1107 River Dr. S.
Jersey City, NJ 07310 (201) 626-5650
- Turkey - Marc Peters (3151) 370 North St.
Sun Prairie, WI 53590 (608) 672-0461
- GM - Buz Eddy (1000) 7500 212th SW #205
Edmonds, WA 98026 (206) 775 - 7127

Fall 1901

- ENGLAND F Eng - MAO, A Yor - NWY, F NTH C A Yor - Nwy
- FRANCE F Mao - POR, A Mar - SPA, A Bur - MAR
- GERMANY F DEN H , A Kie - HOL, A Ruh - BEL
- ITALY F Ion - TUN, A APU H , A PIE H
- AUSTRIA A VIE - Gal, F Alb - GRE, A SER S Rus F Rum
- RUSSIA A WAR - Gal, F Gob - SWE, F RUM H
A UKR S F Rum
- TURKEY A Smy - CON, F BLA S A Bul
A BUL S Ita A APU - Gre (nso)

- | | | |
|---------|---------------------|----|
| England | Home, NWY | +1 |
| France | Home, SPA, POR | +2 |
| Germany | Home, DEN, HOL, BEL | +3 |
| Italy | Home, TUN | +1 |
| Austria | Home, SER, GRE | +2 |
| Russia | Home, SWE, RUM | +2 |
| Turkey | Home, BUL | +1 |

During the turn the players were notified that since this game is no replacement that no amount of NMR will result in CD.

Two players inquired about NMR insurance. No. The policy is NMR at mail time on deadline day (1 PM) is NMR.

You have the address and a phone number. The Fax number is (206) 672-0461. The home phone is (206) 774-8588 where one set of orders was delivered to my mother-in-law on deadline day. There is also my message phone (206) 726-3433 which will record and transmit your moves. For either of the last two they had best be spelled out letter by letter.

I am going to ask the following people to provide commentary. Kathy Caruso, Peter Fuchs, David Hood, Lee Kendter, Andy Lischett, Russ Rusnak, Randolph Smyth.

American Diplomacy Register

FREE recording service for DIPLOMACY play

- . SEND results of Diplomacy play (Players names, countries, W,D,L)
Receive a compilation report, rating results, and news.
- . SEND announcements of tournaments, conventions, and special club
events for inclusion in monthly Register.
- . SEND name of contact person, address, telephone for listing in
"WHERE TO PLAY DIPLOMACY" directory.

AMERICAN DIPLOMACY REGISTER
c/o Burrard W. Eddy, CPA
7500 212th St. SW #205
Edmonds, WA 98026

If you want to help move the American Diplomacy Register forward what is needed now is game results. If you played any kind of FTF game that you remember one or more of the players, and the results, please send it along. This includes tournament games because it seems that game by game tournament records are not regularly maintained.

It would be helpful if you could use the format suggested in the accompanying American Diplomacy Register. A least an approximation of the date of the game would let it fall in sequence. Also an indication if the reported game(s) was at an event might assist in reconstructing that entire event.

BURRARD W. EDDY

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

**7500 212TH ST. S.W., SUITE 205
EDMONDS, WA 98020**